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OF THE

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Reformed

PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD

OF IRELAND,

AT A

Meeting held in Moneymore,

JULY, 1831.

BALLYMENA:

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MINUTES OF A MEETING

OF THE

Reformed Presbyterian Synod

IN IRELAND,

Moneymore, July 12th, 1831.—Twelve o'clock, N—n.

The Rev. CLARKE HOUSTON, Moderator, having preached from Matt. xxviii. 20, last clause, —"And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," constituted the Synod by Prayer.

The Meeting was attended by the following Ministers and Elders:—

Western Presbytery.

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	CONGREGATIONS.
1 William Gamble,	William Patterson,	Rathmelton, Gortlee.
2 Alex. Brittin,	Joseph Lewis,	Bready.
3 Jas. P. Sweeny,	Robert Marshall,	Faughan.
4 Arthur Fullerton,	Matth. Hodge,	Nowtownlimavady.
5 Gordon T. Ewing,	Robert Young.	Derry.
6 Robert G. Orr.	.....	.....

Eastern Presbytery.

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	CONGREGATIONS.
1 John Paul,	Robert Owens,	Loughmourne.
2 John Alexander,	Samuel Carlile,	Belfast.
3 Clarke Houston,	William Wright,	Cullybackey.
4 John W. Graham,	John M'Ewen,	Bailiesmill.
5 W. Henry....	Thomas M'Clement.	Newtownards.

Northern Presbytery.

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	CONGREGATIONS.
1 W. Leland	Samuel Jackson,	Kilraughts.
2 Simon Cameron,	Robert Archbold,	Ballylaggin.
3 James Dick,	Hugh Orr,	Kellswater.
4 James Smyth,	Samuel M'Ewen,	Drumbolg.
5 Samuel Carlile,	.....	Ballyrashane.
6 Thomas Houston.	James M'Conkey.	Knockbracken.
7 W. J. Glasgow		

Southern Presbytery.

MINISTERS.	ELDERS.	CONGREGATIONS.
1 Hans Boggs,	Robert Crookshanks,	Ballylane.
2 John Stewart,	Thomas Clyde,	Rathfriland.
3 Thomas Cathcart,	John Brownlee,	Ballybay.
4 John Hawthorne.	Hugh Hawthorne.	Ballenon.

Ministers *absent at Constitution*, Messrs. Britton, Derry, Carlile, and Cathcart.

Elders not present from Congregations of Derry, Newtownards, Ballyrashane, Knockbreda, and Ballybay.

1.—The Rev. John Alexander, and the Rev. J. Smy[illegible] sat in nomination for the office of Moderator, and Mr. Alexander was elected.

2.—The Rev. Thos. Houston, who had been Clerk, *pro tempore*, having intimated his wish to resign, Mr. C. Houston was invited to resume the office. With this invitation he complied, and received the books.

3.—The Minutes of last Session were read.

4.—Inquiry having been made if the Reports of the several Presbyteries were in readiness, the Clerk of the Southern Presbytery laid on the table their Report, and it was agreed that those of the other three Presbyteries should be given in at the commencement of the first Session tomorrow.

5.—Resolved, that a Session of the present Meeting be spent in devotional exercises.

6.—The Rev. Gordon T. Ewing being now present, was invited to a seat in Court, of which he accepted; and Mr. Robert Young, commissioned as Elder from the congregation of Derry, was also invited to sit in Court, and their names were added to the roll. The Rev. Robert G. Orr, a member of the Western Presbytery, on invitation, also accepted of a seat in Synod.

7.—Agreed, that the Synod adjourn till six o'clock this evening, when the members meet as a Committee of Bills: and that the Synod meet for public business to-morrow, at seven o'clock, A. M. Adjourned accordingly by prayer.

Second Session.

Wednesday, 7 oclock, A. M.

The Synod met, after adjournment, and was constituted by prayer. The roll being called,

four Ministers did not answer to their names; and the Rev. Messrs. Carlile and Brittin were present, and Elders from Bready, Newtownards, and Knockbracken.

8.—The following Reports of Presbyteries were received and read:—

The SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY report, that since the meeting of Synod, 1830, they have held six meetings. The Rev. T. Cathcart is Moderator, and the Rev. John Hawthorne, Clerk. Gospel order generally prevails in the congregations under their inspection; ordinances continue to be regularly dispensed; the days of Humiliation and Thanksgiving appointed by Synod, have been observed; the claims of the Missionary Society have, in general, been attended to; the Lord's Supper has been dispensed in two of the congregations, and in the vacancy of Grange, and arrangements will be made for dispensing it in the other two congregations in the course of the summer; the vacancies of Corenery and Grange are, occasionally, supplied with the preaching of the Word, but not so often as the people desire, owing to the want of preachers; the number of members at Corenery, as also in several of our congregations, is greatly diminished by emigrations to America.

Presbytery presuming, on the approbation of this Synod, further report, that, in compliance with a memorial from the Board of Directors of the Home and Foreign Missionary Society of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, they did, with the assistance of brethren from the Northern and Eastern Presbyteries, ordain Mr. Wm. Sommerville, Licentiate, to the office of the Holy Ministry, on the 31st of May, in order to his being sent forth, by the Society, on the mission to New Brunswick, and the British colonies of North America.

They also report, that the Students of Theology, Thos. Boyd and Wm. Gibson, having furnished the usual specimens of trial for license with approbation, were, on the 28th of June, licensed to preach the everlasting Gospel. John Stott, Student of Moral Philosophy, being absent from College last winter, was employed in revising his former studies, composing essays on subjects connected therewith, and in preparing for the prosecution of his studies at the Theological Seminary in Paisley, and at the Belfast Academical Institution in the ensuing Session.—Finally, Presbytery having obtained help of God, state, that they have continued for another year, steadfastly adhering to the doctrine worship, discipline and Government of the Reformed Church of Scotland, "exhorting and testifying to all, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand."

The WESTERN PRESBYTERY report, that in reviewing their proceedings since July 1830, they have nothing of an unpleasant nature to lay before the Synod. By the kindness of God, the several congregations under their pastoral inspection, continue to prosper. Since last meeting of Synod they have held five meetings; the ordinances of religion continue to be regularly dispensed in all the congregations under

their stated pastors, and the vacancies of Convoy and Derry occasionally enjoy the dispensation of Gospel ordinances. The days of Thanksgiving and Humiliation have been observed.

Presbytery have great pleasure in stating, that they have been favoured with the assistance of the Rev. Gordon T. Ewing, for several months past, to whom a call was addressed from the vacant congregation of Derry; the call was sustained by Presbytery and presented to Mr. Ewing, who assigned reasons, satisfactory to the Court, why he could not, at present, accept it; the call was therefore held in retentis, and, with the concurrence of Presbytery, Mr. Ewing engaged to officiate in the congregation for one year. Mr. A. M'Farland was, on 21st of October, licensed to preach the everlasting Gospel, and, having preached with acceptance in the bounds of the Presbytery, emigrated to America in May last. They have, under their care, as candidates for the office of the Ministry, Mr. James Reid, student of Natural Philosophy, and Messrs. Dill, Reid, and King, students of Logic. The Rev. James P. Sweeny is their Moderator, and Rev. Alex. Britton, their Clerk for this year. They have only farther to state, that they wish to obtain the advice of Syond respecting a certain matter.

The NORTHERN PRESBYTERY report, that since July, 1830, they have held five meetings, at which, the last accepted, the members regularly attended. The appointments of Synod have all been observed, and the ordinances of religion are administered in the congregations under their care. On the 30th of March last, Mr. John Nevin, having submitted the pieces of trial assigned to him, and having undergone the usual examinations, was licensed to preach, and has been regularly employed, since that time, under the direction of Presbytery, who now crave that his name be enrolled with the Licentiates of Synod.

Mr. James Riddal, Student of Moral Philosophy, has removed from their bounds and is no longer under their care. The other Students under their direction, Robt. J. Watt, John Gamble and G. Savage, continue to prosecute their studies with diligence and success. Applications for sermon have been received from Killinchy and Magherafelt; and Presbytery are of opinion that, if means were equal to the demand, much good might be effected, especially in those districts where the principles of this Church have, at any time, been established. A large field of usefulness is opening for the labours of intelligent, laborious, and enterprising licentiates; and it is the prayer of Presbytery that many such may be sent.

The Rev. Simon Cameron is the Moderator, and the Rev. W. J. Stavely the Clerk of Presbytery.

The EASTERN PRESBYTERY report, that the Rev. John Alexander is their Moderator, and the Rev. John W. Graham their Clerk, for this year. Since last meeting of Synod they have held three regular meetings, and one PRO RE NATA. The days of Thanksgiving and Fasting appointed by Synod, have been observed, and all their congregations continue to enjoy the regular dispensation of the ordinances of religion, with the exception of Newtownards, left vacant for the time, by the mission of the Rev. Wm. Henry, to attend the meeting of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod in America. Since his departure, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been dispensed in the congregation, and the

Gospel preached as frequently as supplies could be obtained. Presbytery hope, that this Synod will make provision for its supply until Mr. Henry's return.

Mr. Hugh Hawthorne, student, emigrated to America in the [illegible] of May, and Mr. Wm. Toland, who was examined at last meeting of Synod, has, since that time, delivered several satisfactory pieces of trial preparatory to his being licensed to preach the everlasting Gospel. They have, in conclusion, to state, that on occasion of their several meetings, harmony prevails among them, and they cherish the hope that their endeavours to promote the glory of God and the good of Zion, have, in some measure, been crowned with success.

9.—The Rev. Thos. Cathcart, and his Elder, had now come forward, and their names were added to the roll. Mr. John Nevin, mentioned in the Northern Presbytery's report, and Messrs. Boyd and Gibson, in that of the Southern Presbytery, are enrolled as licentiates, under the direction of this Synod.

10.—It was moved and seconded, that a Member or Members of Synod be appointed to prepare a pamphlet, expressive of our views with regard to registering leases and exercising the elective franchise at elections, and that it be afterwards submitted to Synod, for the purpose of being published and circulated among the religious community. This motion having been carried, the Rev. John Stewart was appointed to prepare such a pamphlet, to be assisted by Mr. Dick.

11.—Resolved, that the congregational contributions, furnished as a remuneration for the Clerk's services, be, in future, appropriated to the establishment of a Synodical fund, the actual expenditure for stationery and postage being deducted. The Committee of inquiry, respecting payments, to be continued for this year.

The Synod, by agreement, now adjourns till after public worship, which is to commence at ten o'clock to-morrow, A. M.

Third Session.

Wednesday, July 13th—Ten o'clock Forenoon.

The Rev. James Dick preached from Habak. iii. 2.—"O, Lord, revive thy work in the midst of the years." After public worship, the Synod

was constituted by the Moderator, with prayer; the roll being called, there was a general attendance of Ministers and Elders, and the Court proceeded to the despatch of business.

12.—On reference to minute 8th, of Synod's proceedings last year, a communication of a satisfactory nature was read from Mr. Stavely, who did not attend this meeting in consequence of indisposition; and it contained a request, that he might be furnished with such information as the Ministers of our Church can give of their respective congregations, to assist him in executing the work.

13.—In relation to minute 10th, the motion for the preparation of an Act and Testimony was renewed. It was moved as amendment, and seconded, that measures be adopted for the republication of the Act, Declaration and Testimony, already in existence. The original motion was then withdrawn, and the amendment passed unanimously. Agreed, that the re-publication be committed to the management of the Rev. J. Paul—Presbyteries to furnish him in the course of a month with a return of the number of copies which will be required in their bounds.

14.—It appeared that the Committee for the Signs of the Times had attended to the business before them, and that causes of Thanksgiving had been published and circulated last season. The Synod then appointed the last Wednesday of November to be observed as a day of Thanksgiving, and the last Thursday of January, 1832, as a day of Fasting. The Rev. Wm. Gamble was appointed to prepare a Summary of Causes of Fasting, to be submitted before publication to the Western Presbytery, and Rev. S. Cameron, of the Northern Presbytery, as a Committee of Synod. Against the part of this arraugement which respects the Committee, the Rev. John Alexander, the Moderator, desired his protest to be recorded, on the general principle, that he does not judge it expedient that Causes should be published without being submitted to the whole Body, or, at least, to a Committee formed from the different Presbyteries.

15.—Mr. Dick stated, that he has been making progress towards the completion of his Dissertation; but that it is

not yet finished, as he has enlarged his plan, which now embraces a historical view of public religious Covenanting from the earliest period to the present time—the perpetual obligations of the duty in New Testament times—a defence of the National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League and Covenant—Observations on the Auchinsaugh Renovation—and the seasonableness of attempting Covenant renovation at the present time. He expects that it may be in readiness for the press at November next.

16.—In reference to the delegation of Mr. Henry, to the Synod in America, it appeared that he had proceeded on the mission, but had not received any pecuniary assistance.—The Northern, Western, and Eastern Presbyteries, engaged each to furnish £10 towards defraying the expences of his mission; and it was agreed, that despatch should be used to have the amount remitted to Mr. Henry. The Southern Presbytery engaged to furnish £8, for the same purpose, against the 1st of October.—The members of the Northern Presbytery agreed to preach, each, one Sabbath at Newtownards, and the Ministers of the Western Presbytery promised that they would either preach there, or each of them procure the services of a licentiate for one Sabbath.

17.—The Rev. Thomas Houston narrated the manner in which he had executed his commission as delegate to the Synod in Scotland, and gave interesting information respecting the state of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in that country. It was gratifying to this Court to be assured of the friendly feeling manifested by the Sister Judicatory, and to hear of the progress of Reformation principles amongst them, as appears from the organization of late of several small stations as congregations, and from the circumstance that others which had been given up for a time are now flourishing, and promise speedily to afford support to stated Pastors. Mr. H. stated, that the Ministers and congregations of our Church in Scotland take a lively interest in the Missionary cause.—Some congregations had sent forward upwards of £30 as a collection for one year, and another £13 for six months. In reference to a request formerly made to the brethren

Scotland respecting a junction of the Synods in prosecuting the mission to the Colonies, it was arranged that the Committee on Missions should regularly correspond with the Board of Directors here, and advise with them relative to any measures that might tend to advance the interests of the cause. A mission is undertaken to the Highlands and Islands. Resolutions, expressive of the Synod's abhorrence of West Indian Slavery, were adopted, and have been published. A book on Ecclesiastical Discipline and Government, is nearly ready for circulation. After his narrative, Mr. Houston stated, that he now places, at the disposal of Synod, the amount of the contributions which he expects to receive as Clerk *pro tempore*, which is all that he requires for meeting the expenses of his mission. The thanks of the Synod were then given to Mr. Houston for the very proper manner in which he had executed his commission.

It was Resolved—"That the Synod adjourn till 10 o'clock to-morrow, A.M. and that the members meet this evening, at seven o'clock, for devotional exercises, and, as a Committee of Bills, at seven o'clock to-morrow morning."—Adjourned by prayer.

At seven o'clock, evening, the members met for devotional exercises, which were commenced by the Moderator, and in which he was succeeded by members of the different Presbyteries.

Fourth Session.

Thursday—Ten o'clock, Forenoon.

The Synod met, &c.—Members, in general, present.

18.—Mr. Paul, who was absent yesterday, in consequence of indisposition, stated, that the *Synopsis* was not in a state of preparation, and that he will assign his rea-

sons, if required, on any occasion of the members conferring together.

19.—The Directors of the Missionary Society gave, by the Rev. T. Houston, one of their Secretaries, a report of their proceedings during the last year. This report detailed the present ecclesiastical circumstances of the members of this Church in Liverpool, and their prospects; the ordination of Mr. Sommerville as a Missionary to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; the appointment of a suitable person as a Catechist, or Scripture-reader to accompany him; the grant from the Edinburgh Bible Society of one hundred Bibles and three hundred Testaments, amounting to upwards of £26 sterling, to be committed to Messrs. Clarke and Sommerville for distribution; an abstract of the Treasurer's account, and the written instructions given to Mr. Sommerville after ordination.

The thanks of the Synod were given to the Directors for the efficient manner in which they had discharged the duties of their trust, and they were requested to continue in office for another year; but several members having assigned reasons why they could not, with convenience, undertake the laborious duties of the situation, and as some, whose names were on the list had not attended the meetings, the following persons were appointed to compose the Board of Directors for the current year :—

Rev. Simon Cameron,	Messrs. Robt. Archbold,
James Dick,	James Fleming,
John Stewart.	Samuel Patterson,
Hans. Boggs,	Hugh Stewart,
John Alexander,	John M'Vickar,
Thos. Houston,	Ephraim Chancellor,
James Sweeny,	Samuel Alexander,
Arthur Fullerton,	Alexr. Sandford.

Treasurer,

Mr. JAMES M'CONKEY, Belfast.

Secretaries,

Rev. JOHN ALEXANDER,—Rev. THOMAS HOUSTON.

20.—A call from the members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Liverpool, was laid on the table by the Directors of the Missionary Society.

Resolved---"That the call be sustained, the Board of Directors engaging to furnish £30 for one year towards the support of Mr. Gilmour, in addition to the sum which the members of the Society in Liverpool promise to contribute for that purpose; and that the call be transmitted by Messrs. Houston and Alexander to the Presbytery in Scotland, under whose direction Mr. Gilmour is, requesting that it be presented to him, and that Presbytery may please to communicate the result. If the call be accepted, the Ministers of the Missionary Board are appointed as a Committee for ordination."

21.—The Committee appointed for considering the Draught of a Covenant, reported their proceedings. The Draught was read, together with the alterations which the Committee had suggested. The duplicate of a letter sent to Scotland by the Committee immediately after their meeting, with the Bond as altered and amended, and the reply to this letter which was received, were read. This Synod approves of the diligence and zeal of the Committee, and also, of their emendations. A copy of the Bond, as amended, is to be given to the Clerk of Synod, and duplicates of it transmitted by him to the Clerks of Presbyteries, that, by this means, it may come under the inspection of Sessions, &c.

22.—In relation to the Rev. T. Houston's appointment, last year, to revise the published plan of education, he stated, that he had corresponded with friends in England, Scotland and America, with the view of obtaining acquaintance with the plans of education in different seminaries. He will endeavour to execute his appointment with as little delay as possible. The Committee of Education is continued to which the document is to be submitted.

23.—Inquiry was made if Mr. Dick had, according to appointment, prepared a Pastoral address to the people under the Synod's inspection. Having answered in the affirmative, he proceeded to read it.—The Court approved of it, and gave instructions for finishing it, having it published, and put into circulation. As Mr. Dick had not completely finished his design, he expressed his willingness to submit the address, before publication, to the inspection of the Moderator and Clerk of Synod.

24.—Moved and seconded, that it be enacted, that congregations,

on occasion of Ordination, be required to pay IN ADVANCE, one half year's stipend—as AMENDMENT, that they be solicited to contribute, as liberally as possible, for providing a library for their young Ministers.

Agreed, that there are no objections against such recommendation being given to the people.

25.—Agreed, that the next meeting of Synod be held in Belfast on the second Tuesday of July, 1832, at twelve o'clock, noon.

Agreed, that the Synod adjourn till six o'clock P. M.---Accordingly adjourned by prayer.

Fifth Session.

At six o'clock, afternoon, the Synod again met and was constituted, when there was a general attendance of the members.

24.—The motion relative to the nature and powers of Interlocutory Courts, was postponed SINE DIE.

25.—The motion respecting the celebration of marriage, of which notice was given at the meeting of Synod last year, was brought forward, and, after considerable discussion, it was NEGATIVED.

26.—Resolved, that the Synod do not hold themselves responsible for the contents of the "COVENANTER," agreeably to the following announcement abridged from the cover of No. 6th of that publication. "THE COVENANTER is not the authorized medium for expressing the sentiments of the Body, and the responsibility of the Reformed Synod is, IN NO WAY INVOLVED IN ITS PUBLICATION. It is just conducted as are many other religious periodicals of the day—in connexion with a religious denomination; but the EDITOR BEING SOLELY RESPONSIBLE for the statements made and the sentiments advocated."

27.—The following arrangements were made for the labours of Licentiates:—

In the Southern Presbytery.

Mr. BOYD.—From this meeting of Synod till November, and the months of May and June.

Mr. NEVIN.—In March and April.

In the Northern Presbytery.

Mr. NEVIN.—From this meeting till November, with the exception of September; also, in January, February, June, and till Synod.

Mr. BOYD.—November, December, March and April.

In the Western Presbytery.

Mr. [illegible]VIN.—In September, November, December and May.

Mr. BOYD.—In January and February.

On Thursday, at nine o'clock, *p. m.* the proceedings of the Synod were finished, and the Session was concluded by the Moderator with prayer.

CLARKE HOUSTON,
Syn. Clerk.